GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:559
ANSWERED ON:05.05.2008
PROCUREMENT OF FOODGRAINS
Bhargav Shri Girdhari Lal;Chaudhary Shri Pankaj

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of foodgrains including wheat procured by the Government as well as private agencies/traders separately during 2007-08 and till date;

(b) whether the Government has directed its agencies to take urgent steps for ensuring adequate procurement during 2008-09;

(c) if so, the details thereof indicating the directives issued by the Government and the action taken by the said agencies thereon alongwith the time by which the procurement is likely to start, agency-wise;

(d) the steps taken by the Government to check excessive procurement and hoarding of foodgrains by private agencies/ traders; and

(e) the action plan prepared by the Government to ensure adequate supply of foodgrains during 2008-09?

Answer

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR)

(a), (b), (c), (d) & (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NO.559 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 05.05.2008 IN THE LOK SABHA.

(a): 111.3 lakh tonnes of wheat was procured by the Government agencies (Food Corporation of India and State agencies) for the Central Pool in Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2007-08 and 163.88 lakh tonnes of wheat has been procured in RMS 2008-09 up to 03.05.2008. In Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2007-08, 229.03 lakh tonnes of rice has been procured by the Government agencies for the Central Pool up to 28.4.2008. Data of the entire purchase by all private agencies/traders is not maintained in the Department of Food & Public Distribution. However, the companies/firms who have filed returns under Wheat and Rice stocks declarations orders have declared purchase of 24.54 lakh tonnes of wheat and 10.97 lakh tonnes of rice up to 31.3.2008.

(b)&(c): Yes, Sir. Directions have been issued to all Government agencies to make all necessary arrangements for procurement of wheat in RMS 2008-09 such as giving adequate publicity to Minimum Support Price operations, opening of sufficient number of procurement centers in all areas having marketable surplus of wheat, ensuring availability of proper infrastructure and staff at all purchase centers ensuring supply of gunny bags etc. All Government agencies have taken necessary action on these instructions and procurement has already commenced.

(d): In order to monitor major purchases of wheat and rice by private agencies/traders, `Wheat (Stock Declaration by Companies or Firms or Individuals) Order 2008` and `Rice (Stock Declaration by Companies or Firms or Individuals) Order 2007` have been issued under the Essential Commodities Act 1955, which are effective for Rabi Marketing Season 2008-09 and Kharif Marketing Season 2007-08, respectively. The orders provide that any Company or Firm or Individual that purchases wheat/paddy (in terms of rice) or rice beyond 10,000 tonnes shall furnish a return to the Food Secretary of the State from where maximum quantity has been purchased, while a return for purchase of rice beyond 25,000 tonnes is required to be furnished to the Central Government. Central Government has not fixed any limit on the stocks of food grains that can be held by traders/firms. However, State Governments have been delegated powers under EC Act, 1955 to impose suitable stock limits for wheat and rice.

(e): Steps taken to increase procurement of food grains in order to ensure their adequate supply under the TPDS and welfare schemes during 2008-09 are at Annexure-I.